







## FOREWORD.

BUT that it is a matter of pride and honour for me, it is with no little sense of diffidence that I can engage to write a note to prefix to a work of a writer who is no less a man than His Holiness Maulana Syed Najmul Hasan Saheb, Mujtahid of Lucknow. From India to Arabia he is acknowledged to be one of the greatest divines of the Shia Church to-day, so to say anything of him here is much like holding out a lamp to the sun. The little elementary treatise, translation of which is here offered to the public, can add nothing to his reputation, can give no idea of his vast erudition—he is too great a man for it. Only it can speak for his capacity, so rare among the learned, of controlling his vast store of knowledge and adapting himself to write for the benefit of the general reader. It was written expressly for missionary work in connection with the Madrasatul Waezin, of which he is the Manager and Mutawalli, and accordingly it is designed to be available for all classes of readers and acceptable to minds of the most antagonistic views and sentiments. This will appear most clearly in the chapters relating to caliphate which it is so very difficult for a Shia writer to deal with in a way not unpalatable to the Sunnis. It is only his large-hearted charity and breadth of view that has enabled him to steer clear of controversy, and suppressing all unpleasant facts that irresistibly force themselves in, select only the main points at issue and matters of principle for discussion. In short, great and many as are the excellences of the book, in connection with the great author, they are to be remembered more for the method than for the amount of learning displayed.

The translation speaks volumes for the abilities of M. Liqa-i-Ali Sahib Haidari, General Secretary of the Nowayyid-ul-ulum Association. To appreciate this it is sufficient to say that it is striven to be done much as a translation of a sacred writing—as close and faithful to the original as possible. Any one who knows the vast divergence between the two languages can well understand the difficulties. For many of

the terms it is difficult to find or coin an equivalent, and for most of the words the renderings do not give the exact shades of meanings. Moreover, the methods of presentation are so different that an English reader cannot but have a feeling of estrangement in reading a translation from an oriental book. Bearing in mind all these difficulties the reader will perhaps agree with me in regarding the production as a masterpiece of the art of translation.

The purpose of the work has already been indicated above. In the same series is published a translation of the Shariatul Islam by the son of the author, with supplementary notes by myself under the title of Islam in the Light of Shiaism. It would be advisable to read both books side by side, as in some respects the ground covered by both is the same and the notes appended in the other for the benefit of the advanced reader may be found useful for portions of this book as well.

Though dealing principally with the questions of apostle-ships and caliphate the author has not ignored the other root principles of Islam, particularly the very pure and sublime conception of God as taught by the Shia Church. It would be interesting to compare this with the teachings of other religions, particularly the traditions of the Sunni Church, though the author, for obvious reasons, has refrained from doing so. Little need be said on the luminous chapters relating to prophetship. In language remarkably simple the author has dealt with nearly all the scholastic problems of *Ilm-e-kalam* relating to this subject; and the chapter may be regarded as an excellent Introduction to this branch of religious philosophy. The main lines of positive evidence will be found in the supplementary notes in the other book.

BARA BANKI :

2nd February 1924.

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A. F. BADSHAH HUSAIN, B. A.

## PREFACE.

It affords me the sincerest pleasure in adding this humble little page to the present booklet from the pen of that great savant and learned Mujtahid, Shams-ul-Ulama Maulana Syed Najm-ul-Hasan Sahib, popularly known as Najm-ul-Ulama, or a star among the learned men (of the Shia world). Truly is he called a Najm-ul-Ulma, for a star as we all know is after all a sun, and he is a sun among the learned men too (for is he not a Shams-ul-Ulama?)

In this connection, it would be perhaps too venturesome, on my part, to open my lips regarding the supreme merits of this wonderful little book. It not only gives in the briefest manner possible all the salient points of Islamic Theology, and its ontological principles but it further gives us full information as to the difference in certain doctrinal and other matters between the Shia and Sunni sects. There is absolutely no comment added while exhibiting the Sunni doctrines so luminously, which act of tolerance by the Shia author of this pamphlet greatly enhances the value of this small though impartial booklet and very much elevates the position of its author in our eyes, because of his large-hearted breadth of view, his sobriety of judgment, and his depth of learning displayed therein.

It affords me the greatest pleasure in extolling the unprejudiced and enlightened way in which the savant discourses on what may be called the root-principles underlying the Khilafat question of to-day, as he throws a flood of light on them.

As regards the intrinsic worth of the pamphlet, I do not want to speak a word, for I do not possess the qualification necessary therefor. But I do not want to hide from the

reader my feeling of unqualified admiration for the style, and for the contents of the little treatise. I expect the public would give this brochure a hearty welcome and immensely benefit therefrom.

“The proof of a pudding lies in the eating” is a well-known English proverb. Adapting this proverb, I should like to state that the proof of a book lies in the reading. So my advice to all is, read this sparkling little book in the English form at least, though as such it is a translation from the beautiful Urdu of the author,—and not a bad translation in all conscience—digest its contents and then form your own opinion regarding it and regarding the doctrinal points of Islam.

CANNING COLLEGE, LUCKNOW :  
*19th December 1923.*

} SYED AMEER ALI,  
M.A., B.L.

It is well known to all, and certainly to those who have turned over the pages of the history of the world and know something of religious traditions, chiefly of Islam, that in the past there have appeared a number of great men who have had the distinction of being held to be messengers of God to the world and likewise there have been many who, continuing the work of the former, have been styled their apostles, successors, or, as the Islamic term is, Imams. It is believed this system of spiritual guidance began with Adam and will last till the end of time. It is true that the series of prophets ended with Our Lord Mohammad (peace be upon him and his descendants), but the series of Imams and Caliphs never ended and will continue to the last day.

This belief finds its support in those traditions of the Prophet and Caliphs, which declare that the earth is never left destitute of God's vicegerent (Hujjat or argument of God as the Islamic term is) or else it would perish at once. Mohammadans believe in all the prophets and their successors from Adam to Mohammad, who was the last of them and hold them all to be the true prophets of God, and their successors look upon them as the means of approaching God and winning His favour. So far as this general doctrine is concerned there is no disagreement among the various sects of Islam, but unfortunately there has arisen so much dissension about the vicegerents and caliphs of our holy prophet that this disagreement has not yet come to an end. This disagreement has split up the unity of the Islamic world and has weakened its power. Only those who were gifted with sound reason and divine grace could cross this dreadful gulf of disunion without being affected in the least, but there were innumerable others who were foundered.

Since every Mohammadan, and in particular those who newly join the ranks of Islam, should be well aware of this difference in religious faith of the two principal sects o



To begin with, we will first give a brief outline of the principal articles of Islamic faith and will then proceed to explain the meaning and import of the word prophet, the qualities that he should possess and the justification for his existence, and will finally deal with the question of caliphate or succession to the apostolical office.

### Brief statement of Islamic beliefs.

**“No other religion but Islam will be acceptable to God.”**

Islam is the only religion which taught true doctrines to the world and showed the right path. It is the religion which has proclaimed the principles of equality and justice to all, has given rights to the different classes of persons according to their position, has taught the highest and most perfect spiritualism and sincerity in life. It has enjoined all those virtues which are commanded by the wise of all nations—justice, truth, self-denial, self-sacrifice, maintenance of the poor, the orphans and the like, has forbidden all that reason declares to be evil, such as injustice, cruelty, miserliness, pride, evil-speaking, and desertion of dependants.

The greatest importance is attached by man to (1) the careful observance of religion, (2) the preservation of reason (3) the preservation of life, (4) the protection of property and (5) the preservation of the legitimacy of birth.

Islam has secured these objects to an extent scarcely found in any other religion.

As to the first it has taught rules for ablutions, prayers, fastings, pilgrimage to Mecca, and other forms of devotions and supplication.

As to the second it has forbidden the use of all intoxicants and ordained legal punishments (Hudood) and other forms of chastisements (Taazirat) for the infringement of law.

For the third it has made rules for Qisas (personal vengeance) and justice in cases of crimes committed non-voluntarily

To secure the fourth one, it has framed regulations as to trade and business and prohibited theft, breach of trust, and misappropriation.

For the fifth one it has established laws and rules regarding Nekah (permanent marriage) and Mutaa (temporary marriage), divorce, etc., strictly forbidding adultery, sodomy and other forms of unnatural sexual intercourse. Such perfect and all-comprehensive ordinances do not exist in any other religion. Islam is the only religion all the principles of which are rational. Each principle is supported by strong reasons which leave no room for objection. All the prophets who came in this world taught invariably pure Islamic religion. The religion, which in the sight of God is the true one, has all along been Islam and no other, though it was called by different names in different ages. In one age or country it was known as the religion of Abraham, in another that of Moses or of Christ. But during the time of the last prophet it was plainly known as Islam, and the Quran made it clear that the religion taught by the former prophets was no other than this very Islam

Any way it is the cardinal doctrine of Islamic belief that the Creator of the Universe is that self-existent Being who has ever been existing and will remain for ever.

He has never been non-existent and never will be so in the future. He knows all, the whole and every part thereof, and His knowledge extends to the existing and non-existing, past and future alike. He is omnipotent, and every thing, save absurdities, lies within His power. He is Living, Knowing, Hearing, and Seeing. He is Mureed (wills and approves) and Karih (forbids and disapproves). He is truthful and He can speak though He has no physical existence. He is not helpless in any way. He has no body, limbs, or parts. He has no place, nor limit, nor direction. He does not penetrate any body, nor can anything enter bodily into Him. He cannot unite or combine with any thing. He has no wife nor children. He is not visible in this world nor will be visible hereafter. He has no parallel and is Unique. He is one. He is absolute and independent, never stands in need of anything and did not require matter or instrument in creating the Universe. It is not necessary for Him to even utter the word 'kun'=(be) nor does He ever hesitate and think.

He is all wisdom. None of His actions can be evil. His actions are all free from defects and imperfection. He is pure. He is just and never does injustice to anyone. He has not compelled man to do either good or evil but has left him free to act after indicating what is good and what is evil. The creatures are themselves responsible for their actions. No one can understand the nature of God. He and His attributes are one, being inseparable from His existence.

Whatever there is in the Universe—the earth and sky, creatures of fire, the angles and the human beings, vegetables, stones, and animals, have all been created by God. There is nothing self-existent except Him.

Matter, soul, light, darkness, the sun and the moon, and the time are not eternal.

The prophets who came to the world were all infallible.

They were the best of all the men of the time. Submission to them was incumbent on all and violation of their commands was strictly forbidden. The Quran which is in our hands is the Heavenly book and the word of God. It has undergone neither addition nor reduction; if it suffered at all, it was in arrangement.

Besides the Quran the Taurat, Zabur, and Injil are also heavenly books. It is also an article of Islamic belief that whatever exists in this world will die some day and at the command of the Almighty God will be brought to life again on the day of Judgment, when they will get rewards and punishments for their good and evil deeds.

The holy book of the Jews, the book of Israelites and the Bible.

Islam does not countenance the belief in transmigration of souls and reason too does not support it. The Mohammedans believe that the Heaven and the Hell exist, that the pious believers will go to heaven while the unbelievers and hypocrites deserve hell. The intercession of our Lord the Prophet and his descendants is held to be of much avail. It will get the Muslims free from the troubles and take them to heaven.

Prophetship is the name of religious and worldly government directly bestowed by God upon a particular man without the intervention of another man.

Prophetship and the meaning of the word prophet.

Hence a prophet is the man who has been granted authority by God to rule His creatures, and having been inspired with divine mysteries and commandments is appointed a guide and preceptor for His servants.

This necessity is so evident that it hardly requires any argument to prove it. But Scholastic Divines have given strong arguments in their discourses in this connection for the satisfaction of common people, so as to remove all doubts and render the truth as evident as possible.

The necessity of prophetship.

We will mention here only one reason derived from the sayings of our religious guide and hope it will suffice for our purpose.

When it is proved beyond all doubt that the Creator of the Universe is Omniscient and Wise, it is to all sound reason essential that He should approve of good deeds of His creatures, and should disapprove of their evil deeds.

But we have got no general law to enable us to know what constitutes His pleasure or displeasure, and the unaided human intellect is not of itself competent satisfactorily to judge about the goodness or otherwise of each and every action. The most it can do is to realise the good or evil of certain things only having obvious bearing on utility. It is quite evident that salvation depends upon attaining to the grace and pleasure of God; so it is for the Creator of the world Himself to enable us to understand in what His pleasure or displeasure lies. His way to do this is to select some perfect individual from among His beings, and teach him everything that He requires him to do and finally confer some miraculous power upon him, so that he may prove himself to be the God's real messenger and also establish the truth of his claims conclusively to the unbelievers. This is what the sending of prophets means.

From the above it is obvious that this office of prophetship is a Divine gift. God Himself makes a selection for this post and confers it upon whomsoever He chooses.

Neither can anybody become God's prophet or messenger of his own accord, nor can he attain to this high office by any amount of personal efforts. Neither can one man make another a prophet, nor can any one's designs have any hand in it. Neither counsel nor concensus of opinion can avail in this matter. Prophetship is not a proficiency which can be acquired by practice, and if the wisest of the whole world and all persons in authority were to scheme together to have

anybody made a prophet, their efforts will be wasted and will bring forth no result. It is impossible that anybody should become a prophet unless or until he is made such by God. This is why the Almighty God, whenever He has referred to prophets or to their missions in Heavenly books, has always attributed their selection or appointment to Himself. A few verses from the Quran are quoted here for example.

1. "We have sent our apostles with clear arguments to establish their claim for Prophethip."—Sura LVII, v. 25.

2. "We sent Noah and Abraham."

Sura LVI, v. 27.

3. "Then we caused our apostles to follow in their footsteps."—Sura LVII, v. 27.

4. "To the children of Israel gave we the Book and the Wisdom, and the (gift of) Prophecy"—Sura XLV, v. 15.

5. "Yet how many prophets sent We among those of old."

Sura XLII, v. 5.

6. "We have sent apostles before thee to their peoples."

Sura XXX, v. 46.

7. "And We placed prophetships among his posterity."

Sura XXIX, v. 27.

8. "And when he had attained his age of strength We gave him power of judgment and knowledge."—Sura XII, v. 23.

In one place He expressed through Jesus the same sense, which runs thus :—

9. "Verily, I am the servant of God. He hath given me the book, and he hath made me a prophet."—Sura XIX, v. 31.

Further the Quran says :—

10. "And thy Lord createth Himself what He willeth and chooseth whom he likes."—Sura XXVIII, v. 68.

Besides, the qualities required in a prophet are known to Him only Who has absolute knowledge and to whom the hidden and apparent are all alike. It is only such a being that is fitted for selecting prophets and the function should lie in His hands only.

Moreover, the spheres of knowledge, which a prophet stands in need of, depend upon divine instructions.

If the creatures will make a prophet for themselves, where will they be able to procure for him the necessary divine instruction requisite for these peculiar spheres of knowledge, and how will this prophet be able to get detailed information about the pleasure or displeasure of God in each and every matter and so how will he be able to guide others? Hence it is clear that nobody except God has power to make a prophet.

It is clear from what has been said before that from a rational point of view a prophet should be infallible and that infallibility is the most essential thing for this office. This requisite has been admitted in a prophet by all Moḥammadans in one way or the other. The difference lies in this only that some sects consider it necessary for a prophet to be incapable of falling into polytheism only. Some consider infallibility limited to heinous sins alone, others believe that infallibility is essential only so far as the faithful communication of divine commandments is concerned, while some do not consider it detrimental to the office of a prophet to commit sins unconsciously;—and certain others do not consider infallibility essential before appointment to prophetship.

Infallibility is the first requisite for a prophet.

Finally there are some sects which consider it essential for a prophet to be infallible or free from all sorts of sins, great and small, deliberate or inadvertent from the beginning of life to its end; and in the eyes of reason it is infallibility in the best sense that is essential to prophetship.

There are rational and traditional grounds to prove infallibility for a prophet, some of which will be mentioned hereafter when the question of a Caliph or Imam's infallibility will be dealt with.

It is evident from the foregoing lines that it is essential for a prophet that he should be the most competent of all his *ummat* (community for whose guidance he has been sent) in reason, power of understanding, knowledge, actions, abstinence, divine worship, contentment, charity, courage and all the other virtues.

## II. Qualification.

Besides, it is far from supreme wisdom to bestow this high post upon an idiot or a stupid fellow in preference to the most perfect and the most competent person, or to set an incompetent or inferior person above a competent or superior one. This is rationally wrong and has also been denounced in Divine Law.

Therefore the selection for prophetship, by God, who is devoid of all defects, will certainly be just and right. He would bestow this high post only on the most excellent individual in the whole *ummat* (community); for the selection of an inferior, in the presence of a superior individual, can only be made through ignorance or want of freedom in choice, and knowledge and free will are not wanting in God. Nor can it be supposed that the Supreme Being would deliberately set up an inferior man to guide and govern his superiors for it has already been shown that He is free from injustice and all sorts of defects. It is also essential that a prophet should be free from all defects and imperfections which are detrimental to the office and may be a cause of reproach to this high post.



Since an incompetent person is generally held in contempt and enjoys no respect, people would not be inclined to obey him, and his preachings would not affect them while the success of his mission depends upon his being obeyed.

“We have not sent any prophet but to be obeyed” says the Quran, Sura IV, v. 67.

As sensible men are not prepared to admit any statement without evident proof and cannot verify it in its absence it is obviously desirable for the claim of divine apostleship to be supported by manifest signs and tangible proofs to enable the claim to be verified. It was for this reason that God conferred on the prophets the power of performing miracles which were the best possible means of their recognition and the verification of their claim. By a miracle we understand the performance of things which are not impossible but are in the ordinary course of nature impossible and beyond the power of men to perform. A miracle cannot be acquired by learning and instruction.

The prophet claims that he can perform a miracle and performs it accordingly and challenges men to perform a similar miracle or acknowledge his claim. By performing a miracle a prophet establishes his claim to that office and the sceptical minds are satisfied.

So far we have dealt briefly with the prophetship in general and are now going to make particular mention of the Great Prophet of Islam.

It is the Islamic belief that the prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him and his descendants) was the most superior, the most competent and the most perfect of all the prophets and divine messengers, and in the eyes of God is the exalted of all.

The prophet of Islam.

Now he claimed prophetship very distinctly and openly, and in support of his claim showed such miracles as convinced those that witnessed them that he was a genuine prophet. The reports of these miracles have come down to us through reliable sources and prove that he was a prophet indeed.

Evidence of his  
prophethood.

It is the line of reasoning that has been applied to establish the prophetship of all the former prophets and the followers of every religion have utilised it to prove the prophethood of their religious teacher. Therefore every fairminded person is bound to admit the same line of argument in the case of the Great Prophet of Islam and to accept him to be a true prophet and messenger of God. Besides this, the past scriptures contain numerous indications of the advent of the Last Prophet, which the short space at our disposal does not admit to be dwelt upon here, but they exist in detail in larger works on this subject. Over and above all, his noble character itself affords the greatest proof of the truth of his mission.

If those who know something of the saintly lives of the former prophets, go carefully through the life of the last prophet, reflect over his virtuous character, meditate on his philosophical maxims and teachings, at the same time bearing in mind that though he was brought up in the midst of a savage and uncivilized nation, he lived a profoundly philosophical and exemplary life and possessed a marvellous personality, will admit that he was certainly a prophet, rather their hearts will bear witness to the fact that he was the greatest of all the prophets and there will not remain in their minds the least doubt about the truth of his claim.

Just as our holy prophet Mohammad-i-Mustafa was the most superior of all the prophets, as is proved by the following verse of the Quran:—

The end of prophet-  
ship.

“When God entered into covenant with the prophets (He said), whatever of Book and Wisdom I have given you (and) hereafter shall a prophet come unto you to confirm whatever is already with you, ye shall surely believe in him, and ye shall surely aid him.”—Sura. III, v. 74.

Which clearly shows that it was made incumbent on all the prophets to attest the apostleship of Our Lord and believe in him; similarly he was the last of all the prophets, *i e.*, the series of prophets which commenced with Adam the father of man ended with Mohammad (Our Lord, peace be upon them all). There has been no other prophet since his death nor will there be any other till the last day.

This doctrine of the end of prophetship is not a problem of logic so as to be capable of rational proof or argument, it is a very important and universally accepted belief of the Islamic world and is derived from the Quran :—

“Mohammad is not the father of any man from amongst you, but he is God’s messenger and the last of all the prophets.”

S. XXXIII, v. 40.

It was simply the will of Him who started this series of prophetship in the world that this high post should not be given to anybody after our Lord to the last day. The true successors of the prophet are undoubtedly equal in rank to the former prophets, rather they are superior to them and are quite efficient to perform the duties of this high post as vicegerents of the prophet. But none of these was a prophet, nor did any of them claim himself to be such. All of them were the Imams (guides) of the people and the vicegerents of the prophet.

It follows that whoever claimed prophetship since the time of the last prophet has certainly been a liar and falsifier of the Quran. And whoever makes a similar claim to the last day will certainly be a liar likewise. Those who have

come to regard the Imams as prophets are also heretics and are misguided. The pretenders to prophetship urge that in the verse of the Quran the word "Khatam" (the last) means only a seal or signet; that does not prove the end of prophetship in any way, and therefore it is not impossible that there should be another prophet after our Lord. This contention is utterly wrong because in the Arabic language the word 'Khatam' (the last) means that with which something ends or is brought to a close. The Quranic term emphatically proclaims that prophetship has ended with him.

Even if the word 'Khatam' be taken to mean a seal or signet that too proves what we have said, the seal being always affixed at the end of a paper, as for instance at the end of a legal document.

At any rate it follows that since it pleased God to terminate prophetship our Lord was sent after all the prophets and accordingly it was declared in the Quran that he was the last of the series.

Moreover, this doctrine is supported by innumerable traditions of Imams which sufficiently prove the end of prophetship.

In this connection we will first consider apostolic succession and caliphate in general and afterwards will deal with the successors and caliphs of the last prophet.

Like prophetship Imamatus or caliphate also qualifies the right to exercise universal authority, in matters religious and secular, with the only difference that whereas in the former case, no man intervenes between God and the prophet himself. In the latter case the vicegerent is appointed by the prophet and so the prophet intervenes between God and the vicegerents. Therefore caliphate is that authority to guide and govern which devolves upon a man as successor of a prophet.

Thus the Imam or Caliph is the person who after a prophet becomes the ruling authority in temporal and spiritual matters as well as the defender of the Divine Law and its promulgator. A man can be a prophet and at the same time be the caliph of some other prophet as it is not impossible that both offices be held by the same person at the same time. It is also possible that a man be the successor of a prophet without being a prophet himself. Similarly a man can be a prophet without being the successor of another prophet. Traditions on visayat (executorship) clearly show that every prophet has had his executor. [It should be borne in mind that the terms Caliph, Imam, and Vasi (executor) have been used in this essay to denote the same idea, *viz.*, the successor to a prophet charged with the execution of the prophet's will and maintenance of Divine Law.]

Ahmad-bin-Muwaffaq gives this tradition with his own Sanad (chain of transmitters):—

“The prophet said that there has been an executor and heir to every prophet.”

Masudi has quoted from Um-mi-Hani the following Hadis of the prophet:—

“Verily, God appointed an executor to every prophet. Thus Seth was the executor of Adam, Joshua that of Moses, Asaph that of Solomon, and Simon that of Christ.”

No prophet left the world unless and until he had named and appointed an executor. This is also supported by other traditions.

Thus it is clear that the nomination and appointment of a Vasi or Caliph has always been the practice of the former prophets and has all along been acted upon.

**There have been some persons among Mohamadans, who**  
 have held that there was no necessity of any  
 Imam or caliph after the last prophet, as he  
 had finished the work of promulgation and  
 the religion had been brought to perfection during his life-  
 time, and, therefore, there was no need of appointing a caliph.

The executorship and  
 caliphate of the last  
 prophet.

But the view which has been universally adopted by learned divines among Muslims, is that the appointment of a caliph was necessary. Although the religion had been brought to perfection, it certainly required guarding and protection, and for this reason the appointment of a particular person as Imam or caliph was essential. On this point the Mohamadans have been split up into two sects. One maintains that Abubakr was the caliph of the prophet, and the other believes that Ali, the son of Abu Talib, was the Imam and caliph. Subsequently various differences sprang up among the followers of the two sects and even the cardinal doctrine of monotheism, prophetship, justice of God, and resurrection could not escape from this divergence of views. Of course, the principal dissension arose on the doctrine of caliphate. All these differences arose after the prophet's death and have continued to this day, and there is no hope of their final termination till the reappearance of our twelfth Imam, the Hujjatullah (Argument of God)!

But since the prophet has said (and his words have been accepted by all the sects of Islam) :

“My followers will shortly break up into 73 sects, all of which shall be condemned except one”—therefore, the seekers after salvation have always made untiring efforts to enquire into the matter to discover the right course, the path to salvation. And indeed it is necessary for every man to take reason for his guide and try his best in this matter and never despair of attaining the truth. But this can only be possible when he has a bird's-eyeview of the radical differences before him and dis-

carding all bias and prejudices, examines the points at issue with a thoughtful mind, always praying to God to lead him to the right path.

For this reason we propose to briefly mention here the important differences and disputes together with the arguments and reasonings of each sect, in order to facilitate the path of enquiry. The main questions are these:—

1. Does it lie on God to appoint a prophet's successor or is it the duty of *ummat* (body of followers) to appoint whomsoever they please as successor to the prophet?

In the latter case, did God or the prophet place in the hands of the *ummat* any systematic code containing rules and procedure for the appointment of a caliph, or did the *ummat*, by their unanimous consent and before appointing a caliph, prepare a set of rules to which they adhered (subsequently, or did the *ummat* act according to what they thought expedient at the time and according to the opportunity at their disposal and had the right to act as they did?

2. Does reason and the Divine Law demand the existence of any qualifications and conditions in an executor and caliph, and if so, what are they?

3. Whether the prophet of Islam appointed anyone as his caliph and successor or not? If he did so, which it was? If not, why?

4. After the prophet's death, who was recognized to be his caliph and whether the qualifications necessary for a caliph existed in him or not?

As to the first point one sect unanimously believes that it is rationally necessary for God to appoint a caliph for the prophet and the followers of the prophet have nothing to do with it. The duty of the followers is only to follow the prophet's caliph appointed by God.

The other sect believes that there is nothing incumbent on God, hence the appointment of a caliph also is not incumbent on

Him; On the other hand it is obligatory on the followers themselves to make a caliph and this necessity too rests not on reason but on tradition. Abubakr-i-Muataz ali holds that it is incumbent on the followers only where there is fear of disturbance and corruption and they too are free of the obligation in time of peace. Moreover, in his book named "Tuhfa," Shah Abdulaziz of Delhi, after stating that it is the duty of the believers to appoint a caliph for themselves, observes that the appointment of an Imam or caliph by God would be productive of much evil. For people of the world always differ in their opinion and desires, and the appointment of a particular man or of a few particular men to govern the whole world would be resented in every age, and will lead to corruption and troubles in which the rebels are sure to get the upper hand and the persons appointed would be compelled either to disappear from the scene or observe Taqaiya or fall a victim to their wrath and the work of Imamatus would come to a standstill.

In the first instance, the supporters of the Imam's appointment by God derive their arguments from the Quran and cite the following verse in support of their contention:—

"And thy Lord createth what He willeth and chooseth; They have no right to choose."

S. XXVIII. v. 68.

From this, they say, it follows that men have no right to make any selection which lies entirely in the hands of God. This interpretation of the verse is supported by the conversation which took place between Abbas, the prophet's uncle, and Caliph Omar and has been quoted by *Ibn-i-Abil Hadid*, in his commentary on the *Nahj-ul-Balagha*. The caliph having remarked that the Quresh selected for themselves what they thought beneficial and favourable to their interests (*i.e.*, they appointed Abubakr as their caliph). Abbas quoted the aforesaid verse of the Quran and told him that the Quresh were not justified in doing that, because they were not authorized to do so.



II.—Secondly, wherever Caliphate or Imamat has been mentioned in the Quran, God has attributed the appointment to Himself. A few verses are quoted here for example:—

1. “Verily, I am about to place a caliph on the earth.”

Sura II, v. 28.

2. “O David ! verily We have made thee (Our) caliph on the earth.”

S. XXXVIII, v. 25.

3. “I am about to make thee an Imam to mankind.”

S. II, v. 118.

4. “And We made them Imams who should guide (others) by Our command.”

S. XXI, v. 73.

5. “And We appointed with him his brother Aaron to be his Vizier.”

S. XXV, v. 37.

As Moses knew that the appointment lay in the hands of God, he preferred the following request:—

“And give me a Vizier from among my family, Aaron my brother.”

S. XX, v. 30.

III.—Thirdly, there are sayings of the prophet in which the appointment of a caliph or successor has been attributed to God. For example:—

(1) “Certainly God chose a Vasi (executor) for every prophet.”

(2) “Certainly God appointed a Vasi (executor) for every prophet.”

These and other similar traditions clearly show that the successors of all the prophets were always appointed by God and the people have had no hand in the matter.

IV.—Fourthly, the universally accepted argument, which proves that the appointment of a prophet is a Divine function, is equally applicable to the case of a successor and by itself suffices to show that God has kept the appointment of the Imam also in His hands, and for the same reason holds good in this case also.

V.—The fifth argument is the practice obtaining in the case of the executorship of the former prophets. It cannot be derived in any way that every prophet used himself to nominate his successor, and it is also certain that in all matters connected with religion and Divine law, the prophets always acted in accordance with Divine commandment. Hence it follows that the successors appointed by them were actually appointed by God. A perusal of the histories of the prophets cannot afford a single instance in which a prophet's successor was elected by a majority of followers. Hence there is no reason why in the case of the successors of the last prophet this accepted Divine Law should suffer any change:—"And thou shalt never find a change in Divine practice," says the Quran.

Sura, XXXIII v. 62.

Saalabi writes in his *Qasas-ul-Ambia* that men versed in ancient history, have said that when Joshua's death approached he made Kalib, the son of Yuhanna (John) the son-in-law of Moses, caliph over Israel. He discharged the office admirably till his death, and made *Yusha Khush* caliph over Israel. And of Elias, the same writer says that God inspired him to go out from among his people, and to appoint *Yasaabin al 'Akhtab*, caliph over them as God had already chosen the latter to be his successor.

Similarly, detailed accounts of appointments of successors by other prophets exist in the books of both the sects of Islam.

VI.—The sixth argument is that the existence, in a particular man, of qualifications requisite for a caliph in God's sight, can only be known to God. No man can be aware of the inner thoughts and feelings of another man.

Moreover, how can it be right and proper that so important a function as the administration of Divine law and religion, which God, of His choice, entrusted to His exalted servant the prophet, should pass into the hands of a fallible and unreliable person by mere consensus of opinion. How incompetent we are for this charge in view of the great responsibility which it involves ! The professors of the opposite belief argue that the Mohamedans of the first age unani- mously considered it incumbent on themselves to appoint an Imam or a caliph, and regarded it so very important that they omitted to attend the funeral ceremonies of their great prophet and gathered in the 'Saqifa-i-bani Saida' in order to settle the question of caliphate. From this event they infer that the appointment of a caliph was the duty of the followers of the prophet inasmuch as the conduct of the companions of the prophet is held by them to be equivalent to a legal sanction, and for this reason, they say the caliphs have been appointed by the people ever since. Their second argument is that by appointing a caliph they avoided that prospective evil which might have occurred in the case of non-appointment. And since the avoidance of prospective evil is obligatory it follows that the appointment of a caliph is equally obligatory on mankind. Their third argument is that God has enjoined on His servants (the Musalmans) to enforce the penal laws to protect the frontiers of Moslem countries to organise and maintain armies for Jihad and to defend the cause of Islam. All these duties are obligatory and cannot be performed without an Imam or ruler. Hence the appoint

And since the condition precedent of an obligation is itself obligatory it follows that the appointment of an Imam is binding on mankind.

The 'Sharhi-Mawaqif' and Sharh-i-Tajreed Qaushji give arguments in favour of either belief, some of which have briefly been mentioned here. We do not aim to strengthen the arguments of one party or rebut those of the other. Our only object is to place before the readers the views and arguments of either sect.

Those who believe in the Divine appointment consider the possession of certain qualifications indispensable to a caliph. They hold that like the prophet he should excel all the *Ummat* in all virtues, such as abstinence, knowledge, valour, piety, charity, etc., and should possess complete knowledge of the Divine law. Because, if it be not so, and this high post be given to an incompetent person when a competent one is available, the inferior will have been given preference to the superior, which is wrong and reprehensible both in the sight of reason and also of Divine law. And no doubt God is free from all evils and cannot act unjustly. Therefore no inferior person can get the post of a caliph from God where there exist persons superior to him. The opposite sect does not consider it necessary and holds that it is enough for a caliph to be a Mujtahid, i.e., exert his mind to attain truth in the problem in hand or seek to do what is right. They do not even think it necessary for a caliph to possess a ready knowledge of the law and say that there is nothing wrong in the preference of an inferior to a superior. They also hold that errors of judgment as Mujtahid are in no way detrimental to caliph or Imam.

The second qualification is infallibility. If the caliph be not infallible he would be liable to err and also to tell lies. Firstly, in such a case no implicit confidence can be placed in what such a man tells and dictates to us.

Secondly, as an Imam he is the ruler and head of the *ummat* therefore people would be bound to obey him in sin as well, and absolute obedience is due to him in every matter. The untenability of such a position is self-evident; for obedience in sin is evil, unlawful, and forbidden.

Thirdly, if it would be possible for an Imam to commit sins it would be the duty of other people to prevent him from doing so; since it is obligatory on every Muslim to check people from unlawful acts. In such a case the Imam will be held in contempt; his prestige will come to an end and instead of being the ruler of the *ummat* he will become their subject, and his Imamat will be of no use. Moreover, it would mean that he should be obeyed and disobeyed in one and the same thing, that is obedience to him would be obligatory and forbidden at the same time, which is absurd.

Fourthly, the Imam is the defender of the Divine Law and this work cannot be trusted to fallible hands nor can any such person maintain it properly. For this reason, infallibility has been admitted to be an indispensable condition to prophetship; and the considerations which make it essential in the case of a prophet make it so in the case of a caliph as well.

Fifthly, if the Imam be fallible he will require another Imam to guide him and if the latter also be fallible, he too will require another guide for himself and this will involve an infinite process, which is absurd.

The followers of the opposite sect hold that infallibility is not indispensable to a caliph and therefore the caliph should be obeyed only in those actions which are consistent with the Divine law. In those acts which are contrary to the Divine law people would be absolved of the duty of obeying him. And, further, if possible it would be the duty of other persons to repudiate his actions and warn him. The words of Abubakr (*vide* Tarikh-ul-Khulafa by Sayuti) which he

spoke from the pulpit before the companions of the prophet, are cited in support of the above statement. "O people!" said he, "I have been made ruler over you, although I am not better than you. So, if I perform my duties well help me, and if I go wrong you should set me right."

The Sharh-i-Tajreed gives a different version of the above as under:—

"For me there is a Satan who comes to me now and then. Help me if I am right, and if I be doing wrong keep aloof from me." The learned divines of this sect have gone so far as to write in their books that even an ignorant, wicked fellow, may be made a caliph. Tafta-zani says in Sharh-i-aqaid-i-Nasafi:—"An Imam is not liable to be deposed on the ground of his oppression or impiety."

III. Qualifications. That the caliph should be able to display miracles, for this is the only palpable proof which can reveal the truth or falsity of his claim.

Generally speaking, any man can claim that he is Imam or prophet's caliph and infallible, and miracle is the only unfailing test of truth or falsehood in such cases. If the claimant displays some miracle also in support of his claim it would be admissible without hesitation. If he fails to do so, it will be evident that he does not possess the qualifications required for Imamatus and caliphate, and his claim is false. Those of the other sect do not think this also a necessary condition for Imamatus and caliphate.

The qualifications of a caliph from the view point of those who believe in appointment by mankind.

Those who hold it incumbent on the followers of the prophet to appoint a caliph or Imam for themselves consider ten conditions necessary for an Imam or caliph:—

- (1) - That he should be of age, i.e., he should not be a minor.

- (2) That he should be of sound mind.
- (3) That he should be free, not a slave.
- (4) That he should belong to the male sex.
- (5) That he should be just.
- (6) That he should be able to conduct battles and be-  
ware of warlike tactics.
- (7) That he should be courageous.
- (8) That he should be able to judge and give verdicts on  
points of law and religion, that is, he should be a  
Mujtahid.
- (9) That he should be accessible and not be concealed or  
hidden.
- (10) That he should be a Muslim.

As explained above, the believers in divine appointment recognise only one method of an Imam's appointment, *viz.*, his being *mansus* or manifestly exalted to that office by God. His being so is either intimated by the prophet whom he succeeds or by the *mansus* who precedes him. The foundation of the prophetship of all the prophets rests on this principle and it also forms the basis of the caliphate and visayat of their successors. No other rule can be appropriate and valid for appointment to the vicegerency of God and His prophet; and a prophet's *vasi* (successor) appointed under it would no doubt be in conformity to the Divine will. On the other hand, the opposite sect recognizes several rules and principles of appointing a caliph.

One of these is the *Ijmaa*, that is, the argument of the men of power\* and position on a certain point.

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\*Literally those having the power of opening and binding, i.e., of managing public affairs.

The agreement of all the followers of the prophet is not necessary, nor even is it essential to secure the consent of all the persons of power and position in any one place. The 'Sharh-i-Mawaqif' has clearly laid down that even one or two persons of power and position are sufficient to establish the caliphate, and to make it obligatory on the people to follow it, on the ground that we know that the venerable companions of the prophet were very strict in their religious matters and were thorough observers of the Divine law. And it has been proved, he adds, that they accepted the caliph made by one and the caliph made by two persons; as for example:—Abubakr, who was made caliph by Omar alone, and Othman, who was appointed by Abdul Rahman bin-Auf and one of his colleagues. And on these occasions, Omar and Abdul Rahman did not consider it necessary to obtain the consensus of opinion of all the persons of status, even in Medina, to say nothing of that of all the learned men living at the time in all Islamic countries, and, above all, this procedure was not questioned or criticised by anybody.

The second way of succession is by nomination, which would mean that besides God and His prophet (who had apparently no such right), a ruling caliph has the right to nominate his successor, without procuring Ijmaa or consensus of opinion.

The third method is 'Shoora' that is, the election of a caliph by the majority of a limited number of voters.

The fourth is superior force and conquest, *i.e.*, if anybody subdues or overpowers a caliph the vanquished caliph will be considered deposed and the conqueror will be admitted as a caliph.

The author of the Sharh-i-Mawaqif has explained that when an Imam dies and a person possessing the requisite qualifications claims that office without the oath of fealty having been taken for him and without his having been nominated



to succeed; his claim to caliphate will be recognized, provided his prestige subdues the people, and apparently the same will be the case when the new caliph happens to be ignorant or immoral. And similarly when a caliph has thus established himself by superior force and is afterwards subdued by another person, the overpowered caliph will be deposed and the conqueror will be recognized as Imam or caliph.

Evidently all these four methods are derived from the conduct of the companions of the prophet and their followers (the Tabi-eens), which has the force of a legal sanction to the people of this sect.

To understand this we have to go back to the early history of Islam.

Since Abubakr was made a caliph by Ijmaa it was admitted to be a rule of law for making a caliph.

Afterwards when Abubakr nominated Omar to succeed him, this action was recognized as the second rule of succession.

Again, when Omar entrusted the work of choosing a caliph to succeed him to the decision of a council nominated by himself, it was recognized as the third precedent under the name of Shoora.

And subsequently, since Muaáwia and others secured the caliphate by superior force their conduct was recognized as the fourth rule of succession.

Now, it is the usual practice approved by common sense and invariably followed by the wise, that schemes and rules for executing a work of importance are prepared beforehand; consequently, when the time of execution arrives the work is performed according to the accepted and prescribed rules; and thus done it is regarded as normal and regular and its validity is admitted by every sensible man. Therefore, since according to the doctrine of this sect it was the duty of the *umma* to appoint a caliph for themselves it was necessary that:

plan of action or method of procedure on the subject should have been given them by God or His prophet, or they themselves should have formed rules in this behalf and obtained the prophet's sanction to them, or at least after the prophet's death and before making a caliph they should have devised a plan for this purpose and followed it. But history gives no trace of this kind. All that it shows is that what was thought expedient at the time was done without regard to moral fitness and was afterwards adopted as a precedent. And since the followers of this sect regard as authoritative, the actions of the prophet's companions and their followers (the Tabi-eens) their conduct in appointing the caliph is also held to be lawful and valid by them.

The first mentioned sect says that the prophet had finally decided the question of caliphate in his life-time. He had made Ali-ibni-Abu-Talib his successor and appointed him to guide and govern his disciples. They urge that rather the question of caliphate was settled the very day on which the prophet was entrusted with the Divine Mission. Mohammad and Ali were both created from one and the same Nur (Divine Light), the gift of prophecy was bestowed on the former and that of caliphate on the latter. Some of the traditions of the prophet cited in support of these views will be mentioned shortly.

The other sect says that the prophet did not appoint any body as his caliph during his lifetime and trusting that his companions will do the needful, he left the question undecided.

The former sect says that it was not once or twice, but on several occasions that the prophet declared it expressly or by implication that after him, Ali-ibni-Abi-Talib would be his successor and caliph.

A few of such occasions are mentioned here briefly:—

The first occasion was when the prophet received the Divine command to warn his near relations ; *vide* the Quran.

“And warn thy near relations.”

Sura XXVI, v. 214.

Accordingly, He sent for the descendants of Abdul Mutalib and thirty men came. He entertained them for 3 days and said, “O ! sons of Abdul Muttalib, I have come to warn you on behalf of God and am about to convey to you the happiest tiding ever communicated to you. I have come to you with the good of this world and hereafter.” So continuing his address he said in the end, “Which of you is willing to become my brother, share my burden, and be my successor, executor and caliph ?”

All kept quiet. He repeated his words thrice, no body responded. Ali alone rose up every time from his place and said, “I am ready.” In short the people rose up saying to Abu Talib, “Obey thy son, for he has been made ruler over thee.”

In the Manaqib this story is related with greater detail.

Another occasion is that given in Masudi's tradition relating to the successors of the prophets which has already been cited before. In it the prophet said: “God appointed a successor to each prophet, Seth was appointed Adam's successor, Joshua that of Moses, Aseph that of Solomon, Simon that of Christ, and Ali has been appointed my successor.”

Also the sequel to the tradition of Muwaffaq-bin-Ahmad which has been quoted above is as follows :—

The prophet said, “Verily God selected an executor for every prophet and Ali is my Vasi (executor) among my descendants, my family, and my Ummat (followers) after me.”

A third occasion was the one mentioned in the tradition of Divine Light (Hadith-i-Nur).

Syed Ali Hamadani, writes in *Mawaddat-ul-Qurba*, on the authority of *Salman-i-Farsi*, that the prophet said, "I and Ali were both created from one and the same Nur (Divine Light) four thousand years before Adam was created, and when Adam was created that Nur (Divine Light) was given a place in his backbone. So we continued to occupy the same place till we were separated in the back of *Abdul-Muttalib*."

Therefore in me is (the quality of) prophetship and in Ali (that of) caliphate." In the *Riaz-ul-Fazail* the last words of the above Hadith are as under:—"Then he made me a prophet and made Ali a Vasi."

A fourth occasion is that of the Hadith-i-Manzilat. When the prophet led the expedition to Tabuk, he appointed Ali as his caliph in Medina and said to him, "Medina cannot remain in peace without me or you."

Again when the prophet had reached Harf, Ali called on him and said, "The Quresh think you left me in Medina because I was a burden to you." The prophet said, "Long has it been the way of the Ummats (followers) to cause pain to their prophets. Are you not satisfied that your position to me is that of Aaron to Moses?" "I am quite satisfied," replied Ali. The prophet then said, "Brother, go back to Medina as it is essential that either I should stay there or you."

A fifth occasion is that of communicating the verses of *Soora-i-Baraat*—*Sura IX*—to the people of Mecca.

*Muwaffaq-bin-Ahmad* has related this tradition in his *musnad* :—

*Ali ibni-Abi Talib* says, "When the verses of the *Soora-i-Baraat* were revealed to the prophet, he sent for *Abubakr* and sent him to Mecca to read out the verses over to the Meccans. Afterwards he sent for me and told me, 'Proceed at once so as to meet *Abubakr* in the way. Take my message from him and go yourself to Mecca and read out the verses to the

people.' I overtook Abubakr at Juhfa (Jappa) and took the Epistle from him. He returned to the prophet and said, 'Has any special command been received about me?'

"'No!' replied the prophet, 'But Gabriel came to me and said that nobody could deliver the message properly except myself or the person who be from me (closely connected to me.)' "

The moral principle involved in these declarations of the prophet is fairly expressed in the following tradition which the more it is considered and reflected upon the more will it illumine the faith.

This tradition has been accepted by all sects. The prophet said, "Ali is with truth and truth is with Ali. Wither-soever Ali turns truth (also) turneth with him." The rightful caliphate is thus rightly held to be bound up with Ali and no other.

A sixth occasion was that of the Ghadir-i-khum which has unanimously been mentioned by the learned historians and divines of both sects.

Here we give a brief account from the book called 'Ehtijaj,' every word of which proves that the prophet made great arrangements to appoint Ali as his successor.

The Ghadir-i-khum lies between Mecca and Medina. When on his way home, after finishing his last pilgrimage to Mecca Gabriel brought this urgent command of God to the Prophet.

"O Apostle! proclaim what hath been sent down to thee from thy Lord: for if thou do it not, thou hast not proclaimed His Message (at all.) And God will protect thee from (evil) men." Sura V, v. 71.

The prophet stopped at once and ordered that all men should assemble. Those who had departed were called back. A pulpit was set up by piling up camel saddles. The Acacia thorns were swept away from the Maidan. The prophet

ascended the pulpit and delivered a long address, an extract of which is cited below. The sun was very hot. The audience stretched their cloaks under their feet and were waiting for the command.

The prophet addressed them as follows :—

“Ye people ! know it well, that Gabriel came down to me several times bringing me orders from the Lord, He is the Peaceful, that I should halt at the place and inform every man white or black that Ali, the son of Abu Talib, is my brother, and my Vasi (executor) and my caliph, and the Imam after me. His position to me is that of Aaron to Moses, but certainly there is to be no prophet after me and he is your master next to God and His prophet.”

“O ye people ! Verily God has set him up to be your Imam and ruler. Obedience to him is obligatory alike on all the Muhajirs and Ansars, and on those who follow them in virtues, and on the citizen and the Nomad, the Arab and the Ajam, the freeman and the slave, the young and the old, and on the great and the small, the white and the black. His sentence is in force, his word binding and his command obligatory on every Unitarian. Cursed is the man who disobeys him and blessed is he who follows him, and he who confirms him is a true believer.”

“O ye people ! This is the last time I stand in this assembly. Therefore listen and obey and surrender to the command of your Lord. Verily Allah, He is your Lord and God. Then subordinate to Him, His prophet Mohammad, who is addressing you, is your master. Then after me Ali is your master and your Imam, according to God’s command.”

“Then after him the Imamat will continue in my descendants begotten by him till the day you meet God and His prophet.”

“O ye people ! think over the Quran and understand its verses, reflect over its clear verses and do not follow the ambiguous ones. For by God none will properly explain to you its warnings and expound to you its meanings, except this

man whose hand I hold and whom I am lifting up towards myself by his arms. And I lecture unto you that Ali is the spiritual ruler of all those who accept me as their ruler and he is Ali, the son of Abu Talib, my brother and Vasi, and love for him and obedience to him has been made obligatory by God, the Powerful and the exalted."

The other Imams have also been briefly referred to in this address and they are mentioned with precise details in many other traditions. For example, on one occasion, addressing Imam Hosain, the prophet said, "Thou art an Imam the son of an Imam, the brother of an Imam, nine of thy lineal descendants will be pious Imams; the ninth of them being their 'Qaim.'"

The event of the Ghadir-i-Khum is prominent and well known. Even a casual observer would not fail to realise that it was a matter of vital importance to Islam and under the urgent Divine command the prophet made all possible preparation to accomplish it. Exposed to the scorching rays of the midday sun, he mounted the pulpit to make the important pronouncement. First of all he informed the audience of his approaching end and then called them to witness that he had faithfully discharged his office. Then he asked them "Tell me if I have not a title to interfere in your affairs better than yourselves." All of them admitted and cried out that he certainly had a preferential right to regulate their affairs. The prophet then said, "Know then and remember that whosoever Lord I am, this Ali is his Lord." In the end he invoked blessing on Ali, saying, "O God! befriend him who befriends Ali and be enemy of him, who bears enmity to Ali, and help him who assists Ali and forsake him who deserts Ali." When the ceremony was over the following verse of the Quran was revealed on this happy occasion: "This day have I perfected your religion for you and have completed My blessing on you and am pleased that Islam be your religion."

This Divine communication clearly proves that on account of Ali's appointment to Imamat the religion was perfected, the blessing completed and Islam approved by God. On the arrival of this happy message from Heaven the true believers congratulated Ali at the prophet's instance and the poets composed Eulogies. All these facts stand recorded in the books of history.

The seventh proof in favour of Ali's succession is the Hadith-i-Thaqalain in which the prophet said, "I am leaving two weighty things among you, the one is the book of God and the other my Ahl-i-Bait\* (family). If you adhere to them and continue to follow and obey both of them and forsake neither, you will never be misled. They will not separate till they reach me at the Hauz-i-Kausar (Reservoir of Heaven.)"

Now it is admitted on all hands that Ali-Ibne-Abi Talib is not only one of the Ahl-i-Bait but he is also the most superior of them. Therefore, the obligation of obedience to him is proved from this universally admitted tradition. Besides the followers of this sect also cite verses of the Quran in evidence of their belief, some of which are reproduced below.

"Verily your master is Allah and His Apostle and those who believe, who observe prayers, and pay the Zakat (alms of obligation) while bowed in worship."

Sura V, v. 60.

The Ulamas of Islam (the learned divines) are agreed that this verse was revealed in honor of our Lord Ali. It clearly shows that there are only 3 masters for mankind. Firstly God, secondly His prophet, and thirdly Ali.

Abuzar-i-Ghifari says that one day he was saying his prayers with the prophet when a beggar came to the prophet's mosque and begged for alms. No body gave him anything. The beggar raised his hands towards heaven and said, 'Oh God! be a witness that I came to thy prophet's

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\*Both the sects of Islam are agreed that the term includes Ali, Fatima, their sons Hasan and Hosain and nine lineal descendants of the latter, i. e., the twelve Imams and Fatima (peace be on them all).



mosque and no body gave me any thing." Ali was bowing in his prayers at that time. He pointed his little finger, which had a ring, towards the beggar who came forward and took it off. This incident happening in the prophet's presence he raised his face towards Heaven and offered the following prayer: "O Lord! my brother Moses had begged of Thee to widen his breast and to make his work easy, to loose the knot of his tongue that people might understand him, and to appoint from among his relations his brother, as his Vazir, and to strengthen his back with Aaron and to make Aaron his colleague in his work."—(*Vide* Sura XX, vv. 26—36.)

"Oh God! Thou said to Moses 'We will strengthen thy arm with thy brother. No body will now have an access to either of you.' Oh God! I am Mohammad and thou hast distinguished me. Enlarge my breast, make my work easy and from my family appoint my brother Ali as my Vazir. Strengthen my back with him." The prophet had not finished his prayers when Gabriel brought the above quoted verse. Another verse cited by them is "O ye who believe! obey God, and obey the Apostle and those among you invested with authority."—Sura IV, v. 62.

In the Kifayat-ul-athar there is a tradition from Jabir, the son of Abdullah Ansari, in explanation of this verse. When it was revealed Jabir said to prophet, "We know God and the prophet but who are these persons invested with authority whose obedience has been conjoined to that of God and yourself?" The prophet said, "They are my caliphs and the Imams of the Muslims after me. The first of them is Ali, and then Hasan, then Hosain, then Ali the son of Hosain, then Mohammad the son of Ali, who has been mentioned as Baqir in the Taurat. Oh Jabir! you will meet him. When you see him convey my salams to him. He will be succeeded by his son Jafar-al-Sadiq the truthful, then comes Moosa the son of Jafar, then Ali the son of Moosa, then Mohammad the son of Ali, then Ali the son of Mohammad, then Hasan the son of Ali.

He will be followed by his son whose name and patronym (Kunyat) will be the same as mine. He will be Hujjatullah (Divine argument) on the earth, and the Baqiyatullah (the one spared by God to maintain the cause of faith) among mankind.

He will conquer the whole world from east to west. So long will he remain hidden from the eyes of his followers and friends that the belief in his Imamatus will remain only in those hearts which have been tested by God for faith.

Another Quranic proof, cited by them is the 53rd verse of Sura III. (The family of Imran.) "As for those who dispute with thee about him (Jesus), after the knowledge hath come to thee say: Come, let us summon our sons and your sons, our females (daughters) and your females (daughters) and our *selves* and your *selves* then let us pray and lay the curse of God on those that lie!"

In the Mishkat, Sahih-i-Muslim and Jami-ul-usul there is a tradition from Bibi Ayesha that one morning the prophet came to her apartment wearing a coloured 'Aba'. Shortly after Hasan approached and the prophet took him into his 'Aba.' Then Hosain followed him and was taken inside the 'Aba.' Then Fatima came and she too was taken in. After this the prophet recited the above verse of the Quran. In another tradition of the Sahih-i-Muslim, Ali's name also appears which is not found in Bibi Ayesha's tradition.

Ibni Abbas says when the Christians of Najran arrived in Medina, the prophet came out with Ali, Fatima and Hasan and said, "I will pray to God and you should say Amin." The Christians of Najran were seized with fear. They declined to undergo the ordeal of Mubahila and agreed to pay Jazia (tribute).

The author of the commentary known as Kashshaf has given a vivid description of the prophet's coming out for Mubahila. He says the prophet had Hosain in his bosom and

held Hasan by the hand. Fatima was behind him and Ali was behind Fatima. One might say this arrangement was made purposely in order to correspond with the order of words in the verse cited above. From this it is obvious that so far as the verse concerned the prophet, the words 'Nisa' (females) 'Abna' (sons) and Anfus (selves) referred only to Fatima, his daughter, Hasan and Husain his grandsons, and Ali his cousin and son-in-law respectively. It also follows that just as it is unlawful for every body to seek to be superior to the prophet, similarly it is unlawful to supercede Ali—he being the prophet's self according to the word of God, and any one who presumed to supercede him was certainly daring enough to supercede the prophet!

In short, on the grounds which are supported by many verses of the Quran and sayings of the prophet the believers in Divine appointment maintain and believe that the prophet's caliphs are Ali and the eleven Imams who succeeded him. This sect regards the twelve Imams as the real caliphs and rightful successors of the prophet and spiritual Lords for the whole Ummat. The last of them was born in 256 A. H. and after some time disappeared by the command of God and will appear again when it pleases God. They are the A'l-i-Rasul, the prophet's descendants and his Ahl-i-Bait, and are held to be infallible and most excellent, next to the prophet. The opposite sect tries to explain away the above testimonies and says that there was no precise declaration from God or His prophet about the caliphate, and relying on the good sense of his companions the prophet did not appoint anybody as his caliph. Therefore the course followed, in this behalf, by the companions should be considered as if proposed by God and His prophet and the selection made by them should be accepted as if made by God. In order to prove the validity of Ijmaá they rely on the following tradition:—The prophet said, "My Ummat (followers) will not unite over error." Therefore the caliph appointed by Ijmaá (consensus of public opinion) shall

certainly be the legitimate caliph. It was for this reason that on the occasion of the prophet's death, when the Muslim world was overwhelmed with grief, the people found it more urgent than all the obligatory and optional duties and even the prophet's obsequies to make some-body his caliph and their ruler. The people gathered in the prophet's mosque on hearing the sad news of his death. All of a sudden some-body informed them that the Ansars had assembled in the 'Saqifa-i-bani-Saida.' Hearing this they were so much puzzled that they did not care even to attend the funeral ceremonies of the prophet which was a matter of honour and merit for the Muslims, rather they were bound in duty to take part in it. But they preferred the appointment of a caliph to the prophet's funeral and hurried to the Saqifa. Thus there were left only Ali, son of Abu Talib, Abbas the prophet's uncle and Fazl and Qusm, sons of Abbas, and a few other relations and faithful companions of the prophet to attend his funeral and mourn over him. In the Saqifa there arose dissensions between the Muhajirs (emigrants) and the Ansars and each party wished caliphate for itself and one of the Ansars went so far as to propose that there should be a caliph from among the Ansars and another from among the Muhajirs. In short, there was noise, wrangling and clamour, and the matter was assuming a dreadful aspect, when Omar very cleverly put down the existing differences by promptly doing Baiat to Abubakr. Abn-i-Khalladoon has mentioned in his history that on arriving at the Saqifa, Abubakr addressed the gathering and said, "We the Muhajirs are the prophet's comrades and his kinsmen and have a better title to the caliphate than the Ansars and others."

An Hafiz-bin-Jarir Tabari writes that Omar said to Abubakr, "Well now stretch your hand, I am ready to do baiat to you." "You should better stretch your own hand for I will myself do baiat to you, you are in every way stronger than me," rejoined Abubakr. And thus for a time they politely continued to offer to do Baiat to each other, when

eventually Omar opened Abubakr's hand and quickly did baiat to him, and told him that he should consider Omar's energy to be added to his own. In the Kamil of Ibn-i-Athir it is also mentioned that Omar and only a few other persons did baiat to Abubakr and all or some of the Ansars said that they would not give their allegiance to any one but Ali. In the same history as well as in 'Khamees' it is stated that Ali and Bani Hashim generally kept aloof from doing Baiat to Abubakr. In the Murawaj-uz-zahab it is stated that on the Saqifa day when the Baiat was over, Ali went to Abubakr and said to him, "You have spoiled our work, you did neither consult us nor took our rights into consideration." Abubakr said, "You are right but I did so only for fear of quarrel."

Abul Fida says in his history that Zobair the son of Awwam, Miqdad the son of Omar, Salman-i-Farsi, Abuzar-i-Ghifari, and Baraa the son of Azib, etc., kept aloof from doing Baiat to Abubakr. The facts do not make it quite clear on what admitted principles Abubakr was set up as caliph, nor have the people of this sect done any thing to make intelligible whether it was done with the consultation of all the persons of position and power or was it given effect to on account of a majority of votes. Nor does it appear what number and what particular qualifications were considered requisite for the electors whose agreement settled the matter. So far as it is known, neither did each tribe send its representative on this occasion nor was the election notified to the Ummat beforehand. On what grounds then this procedure is held to be binding on the whole Ummat and believed to have been approved by God and His Apostle, and for what reason its result is considered sufficient to legalize the exercise of absolute authority—even the learned men of this sect have been unable to explain satisfactorily. The commentator of Mawaqif has written only this much: "You should understand that the acquirement of caliphate does not depend on the consensus of the opinion of all the persons of power and position,

On the other hand only one or two persons of power and position are quite sufficient to establish Imamatus for any one and make it binding on all." In short there does not appear to be any justification for this caliphate except that it was the work of the companions of the prophet and the learned men of this sect have considered this much as sufficient.

7. Topic.—To all appearance Abubakr was admitted as a caliph. But what actually happened was this. First of all Omar accepted him as caliph although subsequently on one occasion he declared that "The Baiat of Abubakr was a sudden thoughtless act, God saved people from its evils." After this some of those who were present in the Saqifa accepted him (Abubakr) as caliph. Then some more persons accepted his authority being threatened and terrified by Omar. Then some others did Baiat with the idea that if they refrained to do so it would create disunion among the Muslims which would lead to bad results. Those who lived in remote countries, when they heard that Abubakr had become caliph, thought that there must be some good reasons for his being set up as such.

Therefore they admitted his authority on hearing the news of his installation. Gradually the number increased so that to this day the majority of Mohammadans believe him to be caliph and argue that since Abubakr was made caliph in the assembly of the Muhajirs and Ansars there is no reason for them to hesitate to accept him as such, otherwise the actions of the companions of the prophet will be open to objection. Some particular persons accepted only Ali as caliph and held that it was not necessary for them to make a caliph for themselves, that Ali was the caliph appointed by God and His prophet. It did not matter whether people accepted him or not he was all the same. He is the caliph in the sight of God and His prophet, the genii and angels also recognise him to be so. Most of the Bani Hashim and many companions of the prophet show this view. The number of people having these views was limited but they were firm

and staunch in their belief. They unswervingly adhered to the Thaqalain (the Book of God and the prophets descendants) and considered it to be the only means of obtaining salvation.

He belonged to the Arab tribe of Taim. His father's name was Abu Qahafa. He was one of the fathers-in-law of the prophet. Bibi Ayesha being his daughter. He was an idol worshipper till the age of 40, when he was converted to Islam. Those who hold Ali to be the immediate caliph do not believe that Abubakr possessed the excellencies which the other party attributes to him. On the other hand they lay a number of charges at his door saying for instance that he acted against the Quran in the matter of prophet's inheritance and did not give the prophet's daughter her due share. That he confiscated the estate of Fadak which by God's command the prophet had settled upon her in his lifetime. *Vide* Sura XVII, verse 28. In consequence of which the illustrious lady remained angry with him till her death and forbade that he should not attend her funeral. And all this, in spite of what the prophet had said of her "Fatima is a piece of my liver, whoever affronts her affronts me; and whoever affronts me affronts God; and whoever affronts God becomes an infidel."

"Verily, they who affront God and His apostle, the curse of God is on them in this world, and in the world to come and He hath prepared for them a shameful chastisement," says the Quran.—*Vide* Sura XXXIII, verse 57.

Notwithstanding the strict orders of the prophet to the contrary he deserted the force of Usama. He was ignorant of most of the Divine Laws. He had the left hand of a thief cut off. He was ignorant of the meaning of the word 'Ab' (herbage) in Sura LXXXV, v. 31, and of 'Kalala' (He who has neither parent nor offspring and leaves collateral heirs, brothers and sisters) in Sura IV, vv. 15 and 75. He was not aware of the rule of inheritance for paternal and maternal grandmother.

When Ali declined to do Baiat (*i.e.*, swear fealty) to him and acknowledge his cali-hate, he sent some persons including Omar to set fire to his (Ali's) house. These people caused the door of the house to fall on Fatima the shock of which almost fractured her ribs and caused miscarriage, she being pregnant at the time. She never recovered from the injury and died shortly after. Such was the treatment meted out to the most beloved and the only surviving offspring of the prophet by his venerable companion! Further Abubakr was dismissed from the mission of reciting the verses of the Surah-i-Baraat (S.IX) to the Meccans. These are some of the charges against him. But those who hold him to be the rightful caliph say that these things do not disqualify him for caliphate and also try to explain away the charges. Among his excellencies they say that he was the companion of the prophet in the cave of 'Thaur.' He was among the earliest of the Muhajirs (emigrants). He was superior to all after the prophet. The prophet had made him conduct the public prayer during his last fatal illness and also made him the Amir (chief) of the party of pilgrims in 9th A. H. The companions of the prophet addressed him as caliph. That the prophet had ordated people to obey two persons after him, *viz.*, Abubakr and Omar. That the adjective Atqā in the Quran refers to him. Similarly they also attribute other virtues and excellencies to him.

He belonged to the tribe of Bani Hashim. He was the cousin of the prophet and his son-in-law. When in Medina the prophet established brotherhood between his companions he took Ali for his brother. Ali was the prophet's self (Nafs) and the husband of Fatima. He was the first who embraced Islam and supported the prophet's cause. He was (Maasoom) infallible. He was styled by the prophet Bab-i-Madinat-ul-Ilm (the gate of the city of knowledge). He excelled all others in knowledge. He was superior not only to the Prophet's companions, but also to the whole Ummat. He was the most excellent of all the successors of the former prophets.

Qualifications of Ali.



He was the bravest of the brave. The epithets of the Lion of God, the Hand of God, the Eye of God, the Side of God, and the Tongue of God were applied to him. He was born within the "Caabah" the House of God and was brought up in the arms of the prophet. He fought in the greatest battles in the cause of Islam. He never turned his heels, nor was he ever vanquished in the battlefield. His heroism is celebrated all over the world. It was he who had the honour of putting his feet on the shoulders of the prophet to remove the idols from the 'Caabah.' He never worshipped an idol. He is the 'Saqi' (the distributer of the water) of Kauthar and the dispenser of the Paradise and Hell. According to the Prophet's word, love of Ali is love of God and His prophet and enmity with Ali is enmity with God and His Prophet. His flesh was the prophet's flesh and his blood the prophet's blood. Obedience to him is obedience to the prophet and opposition to him is opposition to the prophet. He is with the right and the right with him. Love for him constitutes true faith while enmity with him is infidelity. He showed miracles in support of his claim for Imamat. To his house the star descended from heaven *vide* S. LIII, and for him the sun reappeared above the horizon after his setting. He recited the Divine scriptures at his birth. He prophesied events unknown to any mortal. In matters of Divine Law he never acted on analogy and personal opinion. His virtues and excellences have been admitted by both sects and have been mentioned by all Mohammedan divines and historians in their books. The only difference is that one sect believed him and his eleven descendants as the only true caliphs of the prophet, while the other sect accepts him the fourth caliph. He will be the intercessor on the day of judgment, and every one shall need his license for admission into the Paradise.

To be brief it is clear that Mohammedans are divided into two principal sects only. One of these believes Ali and his eleven desce

Conclusion.

caliphs. Their arguments have already been stated above. This sect of Mohammedans is better known as the Shia sect. The other sect believes Abubakr, Omar, Othman, and Ali as successors of the prophet in the order named and adds, Muawia, Yazid, Abdul Malik son of Marwan, Waleed, Sulaiman, Yazid and Hisham, also Waleed, son of Yazid-bin-Abdul Malik, to the list of caliphs to make up twelve; *vide* the history of caliphs (Tarikh-ul-Khulafa by Sayuti). This sect is known as the Sunni sect.

These two sects differ not only on the subject of caliphate, but also in details of belief in unity, prophetship, and resurrection. There are also marked differences in matters of ritual such as ablutions, prayers, fasting, obligatory alms, and pilgrimage, as well as in juristic matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and trade, etc.

It is expected that the readers will easily arrive at a right conclusion after going patiently through the above pages and will be able to judge which of the two creeds is the right one.

“And God guideth whom he pleaseth into the straight path.”

THE END.

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